

Fact Sheet

Kids Come First Phase II

Quality Assurance

Safety
Permanency
Engagement
Child and Family Well Being
Adolescents
Kinship Care
Recruitment & Retention
Consultation & Collaboration
Array of Services
> **Quality Assurance**



Improving the lives of children and youth at risk

SUCCESS STORY

ISSUE

The Children's Administration is building accountability by using data-driven, outcome-based decision making and aligning the infrastructure to support implementation of Kids Come First Phase II. To evaluate success and lessons learned, it is important to have a strong quality assurance system that emphasizes research, self-evaluation through case review, training and a continuous quality improvement process that provides strong technical assistance and practice support to the field.

OUTCOMES

- ◆ Improve training, information systems and quality assurance to support practice

\$6.3 Million
23 FTE's

FUNDING REQUESTED TO

- ◆ Provide mandatory on-going training for staff, foster and kinship care providers and contracted service providers to support systemic changes and meet federal training requirements
- ◆ Develop a new data and case management information system to improve data integrity and capacity to track cases with new tools to facilitate efficient case management that enables social workers to have more time to spend with children and families
- ◆ Improve quality assurance capacity to measure statewide practice in relation to the required federal performance measures and maintain compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act

- ◆ Provide program and policy support that increases accountability and improves performance

RESULTS OF NON-FUNDING

- ◆ Staff and providers will not have the knowledge and skills to support systemic change and improved practice
- ◆ Foster parents may lack training needed to successfully foster children with emotional, physical and behavioral problems
- ◆ High risk that the current case and management information system will be inoperative for periods of time and limited capacity to make system improvements to meet changing needs potentially placing children at risk
- ◆ Maintain current case review capacity and limited ability to assess progress on federal performance measures and implementation of Kids Come First Phase II
- ◆ Failure to meet federal training requirements
- ◆ No case review model for Indian Child Welfare cases
- ◆ Non-compliance with the Braam foster care lawsuit settlement agreement regarding placement stability and foster parent training

Children's Administration's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program is special and unique among the states. It is a pioneer program in advocacy for foster children who have special needs to receive SSI benefits. It also is a source of federal funding to contribute to the cost of care expenses for foster children. The state of Montana recognized the advantages of an SSI program for their own foster children and state revenue. Montana supported all travel costs associated for two Children's staff to go to Helena to consult directly with their staff and present two days of training. By the time our staff left, the Montana staff had a clear plan to successfully implement and support their new SSI program. The Washington SSI Program will continue to provide follow-up consultation as Montana's new SSI program grows.



Children's Administration

CHART

The Central Case Review Team conducted 33 office reviews of cases open in the year 2003. The office reviews occurred between March 2003 and March 2004, and included cases open in all four quarters of 2003. All regions were represented and participated in the Central Case Reviews. The purpose of case review is to assist Children's Administration staff in delivering the highest standard of services possible to children and families.

| Type of Case | Total Number of Cases Reviewed |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Child Protective Services | 502 |
| Child Welfare Services (CWS), Out-of-Home Placement | 405 |
| CWS, In-Home Dependency | 96 |
| Family Reconciliation Services | 165 |
| Total Cases | 1,168 |

RESEARCH

Thirteen of the 44 children's services offices plus headquarters have met the rigorous, nationally recognized standards of social work practice established by the Council on Accreditation (COA) of Services for Families and Children, a New York-based international body that accredits human service program. Accreditation focuses on the systems, policies and procedures in place to support good practices. The standards represent the most recent research, practices and regulations that currently define a well-run organization. Once all 44 field offices reach the same COA standards, the entire DSHS Children's Administration will be considered accredited.

A strong quality assurance system correlates with the well-being outcome "families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs" according to the summary of final reports from the federal Child and Family Services Review (FFY 2002-2004). (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*)